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REFERENCE: [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENT TO L-4696

11 JANUARY 1968

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YEN BAI AIRFIELD (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

YEN BAI, NORTH VIETNAM

2143N 10451E
[REDACTED]

1. SIGNIFICANCE:

THIS BRIEFING BOARD DEPICTS THE CURRENT STATUS AND LEVEL OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY AT YEN BAI AIRFIELD.

2. LOCATION:

THE AIRFIELD IS LOCATED 1.7 NM NORTHWEST OF YEN BAI.

3. BACKGROUND:

PHOTOGRAPHY OF THIS AREA IN LATE AUGUST 1965 REVEALED ONLY ISOLATED AREAS OF DWELLING AND RICE PADDIES ALONG THE HIGHWAY PARALLEL TO THE HA NOI/LAO CAI RAIL LINE, AND IN SEVERAL AREAS IN THE VALLEYS BETWEEN THE KARST HILLS NORTH OF THE RED RIVER. THREE ROAD SEGMENTS, LEADING FROM THE MAIN ROAD, APPEARED TO BE UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF NOVEMBER 1965 REVEALED A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY. A MAJOR EFFORT HAD ADDED TWO HUNDRED AND THREE NEW BUILDINGS WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE AREA. THEY APPEARED TO BE BARRACKS OR STORAGE-TYPE BUILDINGS AND WERE NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE INDIGENOUS VIETNAMESE CONSTRUCTION.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF DECEMBER 1965 REVEALED THAT MAJOR EARTH MOVING HAD TAKEN PLACE IN AN ATTEMPT TO LEVEL AND FILL THE PREDOMINATELY KARST TERRAIN. TWO LARGE AND SEVERAL MINOR CANALS HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED ADJACENT TO THE AREA OF EARTH MOVING ACTIVITY. SIXTEEN NEW AW SITES, FIFTY-FOUR NEW BUILDINGS AND

NGA review(s)
completed.

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NUMEROUS PIECES OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT WERE ALSO NOTED.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF MARCH 1966 REVEALED THE EMERGENCE OF AN EXTENSIVE DRAINAGE PATTERN. INDIVIDUAL REVELMENTS AND REVELTED TRUCK PARKS HAD BEEN BUILT ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE ITSELF. AN OPEN STORAGE AREA WAS OBSERVED ADJACENT TO THE ACTIVITY AND NUMEROUS PIECES OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT WERE OBSERVED WITHIN THE AREA.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF APRIL 1966 INDICATED THAT THE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WAS NOW CENTERED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON LEVELING AND FILLING THE TERRAIN IN ONE PARTICULAR AREA. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE FROM AUGUST THROUGH DECEMBER 1965 HAD INDICATED THAT THE PRIMARY EFFORT WAS TO DEVELOP GOOD LOGISTICAL SUPPORT BY DEVELOPING AN ADEQUATE ROAD SYSTEM AS WELL AS ADEQUATE STORAGE AND SUPPORT FACILITIES. THE APRIL COVERAGE INDICATED. A PHASING OUT OF THIS AS A PRIME ACTIVITY WITH FEW NEW ROAD EXTENSIONS OR NEW BUILDINGS OBSERVED SINCE DECEMBER. THE NEW PHASE CENTERED AROUND THE LEVELING OF THE TERRAIN, ALONG WITH THE ENLARGEMENT AND EXTENSION OF THE ALREADY DEVELOPING DRAINAGE SYSTEM.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF JUNE 1966 REVEALED THAT NEW EARTH MOVING ACTIVITY HAD ENLARGED THE PREVIOUS AREA UNDER CONSTRUCTION TO APPROXIMATELY 10,500 X 950 FT. ORIENTED IN A NW/SE DIRECTION, AND INCLUDED ROADS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE RUNWAY.

ALSO OBSERVED WAS A LARGE STORAGE COMPLEX, COVERING AN AREA OF APPROXIMATELY THREE SQUARE NAUTICAL MILES, IMMEDIATELY NORTHEAST OF THE CONSTRUCTION AREA. INDICATIONS WERE THAT THIS AREA WAS BEING USED PRIMARILY FOR

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WORKER'S HOUSING AND THE STORAGE OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT. A TOTAL OF SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETEEN BUILDINGS WERE OBSERVED WITHIN THE AREA OF INTEREST AT THIS TIME.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF MAY 1967 REVEALED NO CHANGE IN THE OVERALL DIMENSIONS AND ORIENTATION OF THE AIRFIELD. THE HILL PREVIOUSLY OBSERVED IN THE CENTER OF THE AIRFIELD HAD BEEN LEVELED AND THE ROAD NETWORK SERVING THE AIRFIELD HAD BEEN COMPLETED. AT LEAST SEVENTY PIECES OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT WAS OBSERVED. THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM APPEARED COMPLETE AND IN OPERATION. DEFENSES AROUND THE AIRFIELD INCLUDED OCCUPIED LIGHT AAA SITES, TRENCHES, AND FOXHOLES.

4. MISSION READOUT:

[REDACTED] REVEALS A HIGH LEVEL OF CONTINUING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY AT YEN BAI AIRFIELD. THE OVERALL DIMENSIONS OF THE AIRFIELD HAVE NOT CHANGED AND REMAIN APPROXIMATELY 10,500 X 950 FT. WITH APPROXIMATE RUNWAY DIMENSIONS OF 7,200 X 125 FT. THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITY INDICATES THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE TRYING TO COMPLETE THE AIRFIELD AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE: CONTINUING PROBABLE CONCRETE SURFACING ACTIVITY ON THE RUNWAY, TAXIWAY, AND CROSSOVER LINKS; CONSTRUCTION OF TEN AIRCRAFT REVEITEMENTS (FIVE AT EACH END OF THE RUNWAY); CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD NETWORK IN AND AROUND THE AIRCRAFT DISPERSAL AREA AT THE NORTHWEST END OF THE RUNWAY; AND, CONSTRUCTION OF THIRTEEN AIRCRAFT REVEITEMENTS IN THE DISPERSAL AREA.

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TWO BOMB CRATERS IN THE RUNWAY SURFACE AND MINOR DAMAGE TO THE ADJACENT AREA ARE THE RESULT OF U.S. AIR STRIKES; HOWEVER: THE AIR STRIKES HAVE NOT SLOWED THE RATE OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY, WHICH IS EVIDENCED BY THE REPAIR OF BOMB CRATERS ON THE RUNWAY.

NUMEROUS OCCUPIED AAA POSITIONS ARE ALSO OBSERVED.

[REDACTED]

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